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House of Israel leader says he didn't know drugs were there

Thu, May 22 2008

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During the execution of a search warrant Thursday at the House of Israel building in Jacksonville, which led to the arrest of a Missouri parole violator, the Jackson-ville Police Department confiscated a large cache of prescription medications.

The drugs totaled nearly 10,000 pills (9,739) and included antibiotics such as cephalexin, erythromycin and amoxicillin, and a number of pain relievers and topical ointments.

According to Robert Fox of the House of Israel, the pills are merely the remnants of Barry Brooks' dental practice — which was forced to close after Brooks was convicted in 2007 of practicing dentistry without a license and was sentenced to eight years in state prison.

"If you came into a dental office, what would you expect to find? There are still six dentists operating rooms and a dental lab here. Barry Brooks' stuff is all still in place; we haven't touched any of that stuff," Fox said. "There is a whole section of the building that is Barry's dental stuff. Do I go rummaging around in his stuff? No, I don't. Everything is just the way Barry left it. Barry left me there because he believes I am trustworthy."

Fox said the Jacksonville Police Department's belief the confiscated drugs were intended for distribution and sale is "preposterous nonsense."

"I didn't even know that stuff was there; I never saw the stuff. But if I were looking to make some money, if I wanted to do something dirty and rotten, then I would sell his dental equipment — not bottles of antibiotics," he said. "I could sell $40,000 in dental equipment and then take off, and Barry wouldn't know, because he's in prison. I could stand on the street corner for months trying to sell antibiotics — who is going to buy it?"

Reece Daniel, JPD chief of police, said Fox's claim the drugs all belong to the old dental practice is not a compelling defense.

"That building is not a dentist's office and hasn't been for years. Barry Brooks had been practicing without a license for years, and therefore had no authority to prescribe or dispense those drugs. Barry Brooks has no right to possess those drugs. Robert Fox has no right to possess those drugs," Daniel said. "Mr. Fox purports to be the caretaker of that building, and as such he is responsible for what is on those premises. Finding these prescription drugs there is no different than finding 15 pounds of methamphetamine or a dead body in there."

Friday morning, JPD asked the media not to reveal the types of drugs found. According to Daniel, that request was made so the police could determine if the medications were in fact what they appeared to be.

"We wanted to make sure what they were before we gave that information out. We've gone through it all with a Physicians' Desk Reference to make sure we knew what we had. We wanted to make sure that we have our facts correct given the propensity of these folks to file nuisance lawsuits. It was an abundance of caution on our part," he said.

David Baugh, the Missouri man taken into custody Thursday for violating his parole, was also arrested in Jacksonville back in April of this year for failure to identify himself to an officer and has since filed a civil suit claiming his arrest was an illegal action by the police. Baugh and another man, Stephen Jackson, were arrested April 7 for failing to identify themselves to the officers who responded to the scene after receiving a suspicious-persons call. Jackson was later found to be wanted by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms on weapons charges.

While Baugh and Fox maintain he was unlawfully arrested, Daniel said he is confident his department acted within the confines of the law.

JPD officials have contacted the Texas Attorney General's office regarding the case, and the department recently received its ruling. The ruling stated that under Chapter 14.03(a)(1) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and Section 38.02(a) of the Texas Penal Code, the officer "had a reasonable basis to arrest."

According to Daniel, he expects at least one count of possession of dangerous drugs, a class-A misdemeanor, to result from his department's investigation into the pills.

Fox, meanwhile, said he believes he and his friends are being railroaded by a corrupt legal system.

"I do not get myself involved in anything that smacks of criminal activity. I'm not here to support any kind of criminal activity. I'm here to support truth, justice and the correct execution of the law," Fox said. "If the law was being correctly executed, I would have nothing to do in this area, and I would find something else to work on."

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